

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for detecting asperities on a disc surface, the system comprising:
  - a glide head, wherein the glide head has an air bearing surface with a peak-to-valley flatness less than about 1  $\mu$ inch;
  - an armature for positioning the glide head over the disc; and
  - a transducer mounted on the glide head, the transducer detecting interactions between the glide head and the disc.
2. The asperity detection system of claim 1 wherein the glide head is cut from a wafer having a wafer surface and the air bearing surface comprises a portion of the wafer surface.
3. The asperity detection system of claim 1 wherein the glide head is cut from a wafer and a side face of the glide head substantially perpendicular to the air bearing surface comprises a cut face.
4. A glide head comprising an air bearing surface having a surface flatness less than about 1  $\mu$ inch and a transducer that produces a signal in response to contact with the glide head.
5. The glide head of claim 4 wherein said air bearing surface includes rails.
6. The glide head of claim 4 wherein the transducer comprises a PZT transducer mounted on a

surface opposite the air bearing surface.

7. The glide head of claim 6 wherein the PZT transducer is mounted above the air bearing surface.

8. The glide head of claim 6 wherein the PZT transducer is mounted on a wing.

9. The glide head of claim 4 wherein the transducer comprises a thermal transducer mounted on the air bearing surface.

10. The glide head of claim 4 wherein the air bearing surface has a flatness less than about 0.5  $\mu$ inch.

11. A wafer having a surface contoured for the air bearing surfaces of a plurality of glide heads.

12. The wafer of claim 11 wherein the air bearing surface comprise rails.

13. The wafer of claim 11 wherein said contoured surface has a flatness less than about 3  $\mu$ m.

14. The wafer of claim 11 wherein the wafer comprises aluminum oxide/titanium carbide.